
Dropout Rate Report: 2006



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This report presents the dropout rates for Arizona's public school students for the 2005-2006 school year. The dropout rate for the high school grades (9-12) for 2005-06 is 6.4 percent. This is slightly less than the 6.9 percent dropout rate for the 2004-05 school year.

Calculating the Dropout Rate

The dropout rates presented in this report measure the success of schools in retaining students. They are generally defined as the proportion of students dropping out of Arizona's public schools each year. They are not calculated as nor intended to be a longitudinal measure of attrition from student cohorts as they progress upward through the grades. Dropout rates are defined and used as measures of school performance and accountability, so it is important to note that they are not primarily intended to be measures of workforce readiness or capacity. Thus, in this report, students exiting school due to illness or incarceration are not counted as dropouts since these are considered events beyond a school's control. However, students leaving to obtain a GED or attend a vocational school are considered dropouts because these events are considered failures to retain students on the regular academic course of study.

The dropout rates in this report are calculated using information reported by schools to the Arizona Department of Education's Student Accountability Information System (SAIS). SAIS assigns each student a unique identifier that stays with the student through their career in Arizona's public schools. For each student, SAIS information includes the student's gender, race/ethnicity, program membership, dates of enrollment, dates of exit, and reasons for exit.

Dropout Rate Definition

The definition of the dropout rate is:

$$\text{Dropout Rate} = \frac{\text{Summer dropouts before current school year} + \text{Current school year dropouts}}{\text{Students enrolled at the end of previous school year} + \text{Students enrolled in current school year}}$$

Enrollment. Enrollment is the unduplicated number of students who enrolled in the entity being examined: school, district/charter holder, county, or state. Students are included in enrollment regardless of their length of time enrolled or reason for exit. Enrollment includes students enrolled at the end of the previous school year plus any additional students who enrolled during the current school year.

Dropout. A student is considered a dropout if he or she left school for the following reasons (the corresponding SAIS exit codes are given in parentheses):

- EXPULSION (W3, S3);
- ABSENCE/STATUS UNKNOWN. The student was withdrawn for 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences. The student's status or location is unknown to the school (W4, S4);

- DROPOUT. School received verification that the student has withdrawn from school and does not intend to complete requirements for a high school diploma (W5, S5);
- GED. Student withdrew from school for the express purpose of obtaining a GED. Students of high school age must withdraw to take the GED test. Verbal notification is sufficient at the time of withdrawal to indicate this as a reason for leaving (W11, S11);
- VOCATIONAL SCHOOL. Student withdrew to continue studies at a technical or vocational school; this includes all schools or educational programs that do not meet Arizona requirements for obtaining a high school diploma. Verbal notification from a responsible adult is sufficient to indicate this as a reason for leaving (W12, S12);
- COMPLETION (AIMS). Student has completed course of study requirements for high school but did not receive a passing score on the AIMS test (W13, S13).

The following events are not considered dropouts:

- The student left school but returned before the end of the same school year;
- The student left school due to illness;
- The student was remanded to the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections;
- The student transferred to a home-taught program approved by the county superintendent;
- The student is deceased;
- The student left school at age 22.

The criteria defining dropouts and non-dropouts given above has changed from that of previous years. Students who leave due to illness are no longer considered dropouts. Students who leave without receiving a diploma because they did not pass the AIMS are now considered dropouts.

Statewide Dropout Rates

Table 1 shows the statewide dropout rates for the 2005-06 school year. Table 2 shows the trend in the dropout rates over the past ten years. The dropout rate for all grades and for high school continued their general downward trend. Compared with last, however, there was a slight increase in the dropout rate for 7th and 9th grades.

*Arizona Department of Education
Annual Dropout Rate Study: 2005-2006*

Grade	Enrollment	Dropouts	Rate
All Grades	508,808	23,996	4.7%
7	87,164	1,221	1.4
8	87,316	1,395	1.6
Elementary	174,480	2,616	1.5
9	92,143	4,149	4.5
10	86,680	4,628	5.3
11	76,700	5,174	6.7
12	78,805	7,429	9.4
High School	334,328	21,380	6.4

Grade	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
All Grades	9.5%	8.5%	8.9%	8.3%	7.3%	7.1%	6.5%	5.8%	4.9%	4.7%
7	3.6	2.9	2.6	3.0	2.6	3.0	2.8	2.7	1.3	1.4
8	3.4	3.1	2.8	3.2	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.6	1.6	1.6
Elementary	3.5	3.0	2.7	3.1	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.6	1.4	1.5
9	13.5	11.2	11.2	9.7	9.2	8.3	7.0	5.7	4.3	4.5
10	12.0	11.8	11.7	10.7	8.6	8.4	7.4	6.4	5.8	5.3
11	11.2	11.4	11.3	10.9	9.3	8.8	8.0	7.4	7.1	6.7
12	10.9	10.8	11.1	10.7	9.5	10.7	9.9	9.6	10	9.4
High School	12.8	11.5	12.2	11.1	9.8	9.5	8.5	7.4	6.9	6.4

Table 3 shows dropout rates by county. In general, dropout rates are higher in rural and northern counties. The highest dropout rate is in Mohave County, and the lowest is for Greenlee County.

Table 3. Dropout Rates by County			
County	Enrollment	Dropouts	Rate
State	508,808	23,996	4.7%
Apache	7,721	596	7.7
Cochise	10,554	452	4.3
Coconino	11,088	626	5.6
Gila	4,393	334	7.6
Graham	2,941	144	4.9
Greenlee	723	25	3.5
La Paz	1,474	87	5.9
Maricopa	314,130	12,912	4.1
Mohave	14,489	1,188	8.2
Navajo	12,123	759	6.3
Pima	75,709	3,929	5.2
Pinal	16,529	1,158	7.0
Santa Cruz	4,990	212	4.2
Yavapai	13,731	752	5.5
Yuma	18,213	822	4.5

Table 4 shows dropout rates by gender and race/ethnicity. Females have lower dropout rates than males. Asian and white students have below average dropout rates while other groups have above average rates, with Native Americans having the highest dropout rates. Native American students represent approximately 6 percent of students enrolled, but account for over 13 percent of the dropouts.

Table 4. Dropout Rates by Gender and Race/Ethnicity			
Gender	Enrollment	Dropouts	Rate
State	508,808	23,996	4.7%
Female	247,634	10,254	4.1
Male	261,174	13,742	5.3
Race/Ethnicity			
African/American	28,111	1,360	4.8
Asian	12,464	227	1.8
Hispanic	188,723	11,529	6.1
Native American	33,984	3,147	9.3
White	245,526	7,733	3.1

This is the first dropout rate report in a series released by ADE to report dropout rates by special populations: special education, economically disadvantaged (as measured by eligibility for a free or reduced lunch), and English language learners. These rates are given in table 5 below. Note that the enrollment count is lower than in the above tables. This is because summer dropouts are not included. Students who leave in the summer are

not technically members of the programs used to determine the special populations. The dropout rates for the special populations are higher than the state average.

	Enrollment	Dropouts	Rate
State	495,357	21,152	4.3%
Special Education	54,717	2,417	4.4
Economically Disadvantaged	174,708	7,949	4.5
English Language Learners	42,194	2,087	4.9

Reasons for Dropping Out

Table 6 shows the reason students were classified as dropouts. Status unknown accounts for two-thirds of the dropouts.

	Expelled	Status Unknown	Dropout	GED	Vocational School	Completion (AIMS)	Total Dropouts
Number	1,635	15,998	3,462	2,700	69	132	23,996
Percent of Total Dropouts	6.8%	66.7%	14.4%	11.3%	0.3%	0.6%	100%

Table 7 displays the reasons for dropping out over time. It compares the dropouts by reason in the current report (2005-06 school year) with to the report for the 2004-05 school year, as well as to the 2000-01 school year (the first time the current dropout reasons were used). Even though enrollments have increased over this time, not only has the dropout rate decreased, but the absolute number of students dropping out has fallen as well, and is less than half of what it was during the 2000-01 school year. Status unknown remains the largest reason students are counted as dropouts despite the conversion to a statewide, student-level database to track students. Students leaving to obtain a GED has increased significantly as a proportion of students dropping out over the past decade.

School Year	Illness	Expelled	Status Unknown	Dropout	GED	Vocational School	Completion (AIMS)	Total Dropouts
2005-06	NA	1,635	15,998	3,462	2,700	69	132	23,996
	NA	6.8%	66.7%	14.4%	11.3%	0.3%	0.6%	
2004-05	504	1,881	14,527	3,032	1,934	78	NA	21,956
	2.3%	8.6%	66.3%	13.8%	8.8%	0.4%	NA	
2000-01	436	2,185	21,075	7,896	1,386	77	NA	33,055
	1.3%	6.6%	63.8%	23.9%	4.2%	0.2%	NA	

Dropout Rates by School and District

The dropout rates for schools and districts are reported on the ADE web site. Table 8 below provides summary statistics for school-level dropout rates. Schools were only included in the summaries if they had an enrollment of greater than ten students.

Table 8. Summary Statistics for School-Level Dropout Rates			
Average	Median	Standard Deviation	Maximum
6.4	2.2	9.8	63.3